

## **INTERNATIONAL SHROUD CONFERENCE, DALLAS, OCTOBER 2001.**

In the last newsletter I made some preliminary comments about the Conference and reported on some of the presentations. In this edition I would like to let you know what was said in the investigation papers. The proceedings started on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October with a blessing by Fr Fred Brinkmann and welcoming speeches by Tom D'Muhala, President of AM\*STAR and member of STURP in 1978, and Michael Minor, organiser of the conference together with Isabel Piczek.

C14 dating is a topic that is always present in a Shroud conference, and Dallas was no exception. William Meacham, from the University of Hong Kong, explained how it would be possible to do a trustworthy dating of the Shroud, contrasting this with everything that was done in 1988. The most serious error then was only to take samples from one area of the cloth. Meacham suggested a future dating with five different samples (the scorched area together with a clean sample from an adjoining area, the area between the two head images, the feet, part of the unused sample cut in 1988 and finally a sample from the backing cloth. The problem of the bioplastic coating would also have to be solved before any dating could be carried out. In the next presentation, however, Marie Claire van Oosterwyck-Gastuche said that it will be impossible to ever carbon date the Shroud with any degree of accuracy.

Dame Isabel Piczek read a paper called "The Importance of Precise Professional Definitions in Shroud Research", about the recent news from Italy according to which an examination of the underside of the Shroud revealed that the image is not a painting. According to Isabel's own experiments with linen and medieval paint medium, the fact that paint might seep through the cloth or not does not prove anything – the only thing that can prove whether the Shroud image is a painting or not is the image itself. Another detail to take into account there is the fact that STURP saw the underside of the cloth in 1978, so the news from Italy was hardly new.

Kevin Moran showed us a prototype compact microscope that is mounted on a three axis stage and has been built to test the concept of taking high resolution pictures of the image fibers on the Turin Shroud. The system is light weight enough to be able to rest on the cloth for stabilization. We were able to test the microscope for ourselves when some technicians came to the conference centre to demonstrate how it would work.

One of the most interesting presentations of the day was the one read by Bryan Walsh, related to the salts found on Shroud samples by the late Alan Adler in 1998. These salts are the same as those found in the waters around the French town of Chambery, home to the Shroud before it was taken to Turin. This could mean that the salts proceed from the water used to put out the fire the Shroud suffered in Chambery in 1532. Preliminary testing has shown that the salts could provoke a chemical reaction that might affect the C14 date of the Shroud. More detailed tests are underway.

Mark Antonacci also spoke about C14, saying that radiation is the only explanation for the image, the bloodstains, the coins and the flowers if they are actually there. It would also explain the medieval date obtained in 1988. Gus Acetta's experiments with radioactive liquid also point towards radiation as the prime cause of the image.

Paul Maloney's paper was quite controversial, something that in his own words he had been "sitting on" for some years. He claimed that the navel on the Shroud image is not visible because it is covered by a funeral lamp. The last intervention of this first day was by Mario Trematore, whose talk about how the Shroud was rescued from the 1997 fire has already been mentioned in my preliminary comments in the last newsletter.

The second day of the conference opened with Dr Fred Zugibe, who over the years has worked intensively on the experiments carried out in the first half of the twentieth century by Pierre Barbet. His conclusions are for the most part in direct opposition, for example Zugibe claims that asphyxiation is not the direct cause of death in crucifixion, and that it was impossible for the person undergoing this form of punishment to lift himself up to breathe. This automatically brings to mind the need for an explanation of why the legs would be broken, as pointed out by Dr Michael Clift in the previous newsletter. Dr Zugibe also claimed that the skin of the palm would not tear if the nail had transfixed this area instead of the wrist, if the feet were well attached to the cross.

Stephen Mattingly's presentation about bacteria and the Shroud has already been published in its entirety in the previous newsletter, and so there is no need to make any comments about it here. It has been the object of some doubt, however – see the reply by Dr Ray Rogers included in this newsletter.

The Israeli botanist Avinoam Danin reminded us that there is only one place on all the planet where we can find three of the pollen species that have been identified on

the Shroud – a short line on the map that passes directly through the city of Jerusalem. Danin was also brave enough to rectify his own earlier statements about the presence of Gundelia Tourneforti on the Shroud, following an analysis by a laboratory in Germany. This is always the mark of a true scientist. It is all too easy to correct others, but it takes more to be able to correct oneself.

Alan and Mary Whanger spoke about their visit to Europe in 2000, when they visited Turin, Paris, Argenteuil and Oviedo (where I was their guide and was able to organise a private showing of the Sudarium). One of the objects they saw in Paris was the supposed crown of thorns from the crucifixion, a small circular object. This does not fit in with what they see on the Shroud image, and so they postulated that in fact two crowns of thorns were used, one to mockingly represent royalty, the other the high priesthood.

Michael Hesemann played part of a video film that he is making, explaining that the Manoppello veil is not the Veronica (as has already been made perfectly clear by Ian Wilson some years ago), retelling the Abgar legend, showing the paintings of the Mandylion in the Cappadocia region in Turkey (images first brought to light by BSTS member (¿) Lennox Manton), and finally part of the Centro Español de Sindonología's work on the Sudarium of Oviedo. The complete film promises to be an interesting summary of all this work.

I then spoke about the investigation I carried out in the monasteries of Mount Athos (in Greece) in June and July 2000, with a special emphasis on various manuscripts that provide further evidence to identify the Image of Edessa (I prefer this name to the Mandylion, which was only used at a later stage) with the Shroud kept today in Turin. I hope to return to Mount Athos in the summer of 2002 to continue the work.

As I mentioned in the preliminary comments on the conference in the last newsletter, Richard Orareo brought some embroideries and engravings from his collection to illustrate Dan Scavone's talk about the Shroud's possible stay in Besançon during the so-called "lost years" from 1204 (when the Image of Edessa disappeared from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade) up to the cloth's appearance in Lirey, France, in the 1350's. The Besançon copy, with only the frontal image, is well known as the copy that was destroyed during the French Revolution, although Dan obviously did not claim that this was the original Shroud. The theory was very well-presented, and as always with Dan, very well-documented, although it is difficult to fit in with the

other theory according to which the Shroud was with the Knights Templar, to my mind the most convincing explanation of the cloth's whereabouts for these 150 years.

Kim Dreisbach's well documented paper was based on the conclusions of biblical scholars like Gregory Riley and Eberhard Auer. According to Kim Dreisbach, Riley and other contemporary New Testament scholars have shown that the account of Thomas in the Upper Room or Cenacle [John 20:24-29] is in reality a late first century addition by the editor(s) of the Fourth Gospel "to an already complete cycle of post-resurrection events" described in that gospel. Auer's contribution consists of offering a fascinating alternative to the standard exegesis of the appearance to Thomas by including in his analysis of this account room for both the presence and influence of the Shroud in the development of this pericope.

The third and final day of the conference opened with a blessing by Fr Fred Brinkmann of the Holy Shroud Guild. The day's first speaker was Emanuela Marinelli, who in her own unique style presented a joint study about the luminance levels of the Shroud image and the body wrapping. Then came one of the most significant papers of the whole conference, given by Diana Fulbright, one of the organisers of the Richmond Congress in June 1999. The presentation was about the forelock as a religious motif. The background to the paper is the forelock as one of the Vignon markings on the Shroud, a series of characteristics that identify certain features of the Shroud face with artistic representations of Christ, named after the French artist who first identified and listed them, Paul Vignon. One of the markings is the forelock evident on so many icons of Christ. Despite the fact that no forelock is visible on the Shroud face, it is generally accepted that the bloodstain in the form of an *epsilon* or inverted 3 on the forehead was confused with a forelock. Diana, with an excellent full colour presentation, showed that the forelock is evident on many Christian icons, but not only of Christ, as it is also evident on saints (on women too). It can be argued that the feature was included on saints as an imitation of Christ, but given that the forelock was also a motif and sign of wisdom in pre-Christian philosophical schools, it seems that it should not be included in the list of Vignon markings. The overwhelming proof is that there is no forelock on the Shroud image itself, neither on the Sinai (St. Catherine's monastery) Pantokrator icon nor on the Edessa vase, two of the earliest representations of Christ (supposedly) based on the Image of Edessa. A daring and necessary paper, which I would like very much to publish here but it relies too heavily on the colour images and would lose its impact in print only.

Rex Morgan spoke about the two portraits of Christ he has so actively and interestingly pursued over the years, namely in the Roman catacombs and at Templecombe in England. Jack Markwardt then gave an excellent presentation about the d'Arcis memorandum, a paper which is published in this edition of the newsletter, and so no further comment is required here.

Michael Hesemann then gave another presentation about the work that has been done recently on the *Titulus Crucis*, and I spoke once more about the work carried out by the Spanish Centre for Sindonology (CES) on the Sudarium of Oviedo. Incidentally, the travelling exhibition related to our work on this cloth recently came to my home town of La Coruña, Spain, thanks to a special interest shown by the Lord Mayor, Francisco Vázquez, OBE.